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IN THREE PARTS: PART THIRD.

BY HENRY JAMES.

VI.

IT is a convenience to be free to confess that the play of perception during those first weeks was quickened, in the oddest way, by the wonderment (which was partly also the amusement) of my finding how many corners of the general, of the local, picture had anciently never been unveiled for me at all, and how many unveiled too briefly and too scantily, with quite insufficient bravery of gesture. That might make one ask by what strange law one had lived in the other time, with gaps, to that number, in one's experience, in one's consciousness, with so many muffled spots in one's general vibration—and the answer indeed to such a question might carry with it an infinite penetration of retrospect, a penetration productive of ghostly echoes as sharp sometimes as aches or pangs. So many had been the easy things, the contiguous places, the conspicuous objects, to right or to left of the path, that had been either unaccountably or all too inevitably left undiscovered, and which were to live on, to the inner vision, through the long years as mere blank faces, round, empty, metallic, senseless disks dangling from familiar and reiterated names. Why, at the same time, one might ask, had the con-

sciousness of irritation from these vain forms not grown greater? why had the inconvenience, or the disgrace, of early privation become an accepted memory? All, doubtless, in the very interest, precisely, of this eventual belated romance, and so that adventures, even of minor type, so preposterously postponed should be able to deck themselves at last with a kind of accumulation of freshness.

So the freshness, all the autumn, kept breaking through the staleness—when the staleness, so agreeably flavored with hospitality, and indeed with new ingredients, was a felt element at all. There was after all no moment perhaps at which one element stood out so very sharply from the other—the hundred emendations and retouches of the old picture, its greater depth of tone, greater show of detail, greater size and scale, tending by themselves to confound and mislead, in a manner, the lights and shades of remembrance. Very promptly, in the Boston neighborhoods, the work of time loomed large, and the difference made by it, as one might say, for the general richness. The richness might have its poverties still and the larger complexity its crudities; but, all the same, to look back was to seem to have been present at an extraordinary general process, that of the rapid, that of the ceaseless relegation of the *previous* (on the part of the whole visible order) to one of the wan categories of misery. What was taking place was a perpetual repudiation of the past, so far as there had been a past to repudiate, so far as the past was a positive rather than a negative quantity. There had been plenty in it, assuredly, of the negative, and that was but a shabbiness to disown or a deception to expose; yet there had been an old conscious commemorated life too, and it was this that had become the victim of supersession. The pathos, so to call it, of the impression was, somehow, that it didn't, the earlier, simpler condition, still resist, or protest, or at all expressively flush through; it was consenting to become a past with all the fine candor with which it had tried to affirm itself, in its day, as a present—and very much, for that matter, as with a due ironic forecast of the fate in store for the hungry, triumphant actual.

This savors perhaps of distorted reflection, but there was really a light over it in which the whole spectacle was to shine. *The will to grow* was everywhere written large, and to grow at no matter what or whose expense. I had naturally seen it before, I

had seen it, on the other side of the world, in a thousand places and forms, a thousand hits and misses: these things are the very screeches of the pipe to which humanity is actually dancing. But here, clearly, it was a question of scale and space and chance, margin and elbow-room, the quantity of floor and loudness of the dance-music; a question of the ambient air, above all, the permitting medium, which had at once, for the visitor's personal inhalation, a dry taste in the mouth. Thin and clear and colorless, what would it ever say "no" to? or what would it ever paint thick, indeed, with sympathy and sanction? With so little, accordingly, within the great frame of the picture, to prevent or to prescribe, it was as if anything might be done there that any sufficient number of subscribers to any sufficient number of sufficiently noisy newspapers might want. That, moreover, was but another name for the largest and straightest perception the restless analyst had yet risen to—the perception that awaits the returning absentee from this great country, on the wharf of disembarkation, with an embodied intensity that no superficial confusion, no extremity of chaos, any more than any brief mercy of accident, avails to mitigate. The waiting observer need be little enough of an analyst, in truth, to arrive at that consciousness, for the phenomenon is vivid in direct proportion as the ship draws near. The great presence that bristles for him on the sounding dock, and that shakes the planks, the loose boards of its theatric stage, to an inordinate unprecedented rumble, is the monstrous form of Democracy, which is thereafter to project its shifting angular shadow, at one time and another, across every inch of the field of his vision. It is the huge democratic broom that has made the clearance and that one seems to see brandished in the empty sky.

That is of course, on one side, no great discovery, for what does even the simplest soul ever sail westward for, at this time of day, if not to profit, so far as possible, by "the working of democratic institutions"? The political, the civic, the economic view of them is a study that may be followed, more or less, at a distance; but the way in which they determine and qualify manners, feelings, communications, modes of contact and conceptions of life—this is a revelation that has its full force and its lively interest only on the spot, where, when once caught, it becomes the only clue worth mentioning in the labyrinth. The condition,

notoriously, represents an immense boon, but what does the enjoyment of the boon represent? The clue is never out of your hands, whatever other objects, extremely disconnected from it, may appear at the moment to fill them. The democratic consistency, consummately and immitigably complete, shines through with its hard light, whatever equivocal gloss may happen momentarily to prevail. You may talk of other things, and you do, as much as possible; but you are really thinking of that one, which has everything else at its mercy. What indeed is this circumstance that the condition is thus magnified but the commanding value of the picture, its message and challenge to intelligent curiosity? Curiosity is fairly fascinated by the sense of the immensity of the chance, and by the sense that the whole of the chance has been taken. It is rarely given to us to see a great game played as to the very end—and that was where, with his impression of nothing to prevent, of nothing, anywhere around him, to prevent anything, the ancient contemplative person, floating serenely in his medium, had yet occasionally to gasp before the assault of the quantity of illustration. The illustration might be, enormously, of something deficient, absent—in which case it was for the aching void to be (as an aching void) striking and interesting. As an explication or an implication the democratic intensity could always figure.

VII.

There was little need, for that matter, to drag it into the foreground on the evening of my renewed introduction to the particular Boston neighborhood—the only one of them all—with which I had been formerly somewhat acquainted. I had alighted in New York but three days before, and my senses were all so full of it that as I look back I can again feel it, under the immediate Cambridge impression, assert itself by turning quite to insidious softness, to confused and surprised recognition. I had driven out from Boston through the warm September night and through a town-picture as of extraordinary virtuous vacancy (with not so much as the figure of a policeman in sight, from the South Station to the region of Harvard Square), and I remember how the odorous hour—charged with the old distinctively American earth-smell, which, in the darkness, fairly poetized the suburbs, and with the queer, far, wild throb of shrilling insects—prescribed to me the exact form of the response to the question as

to one's sense of a "great change" already so often sounded. "A great change? No change at all. Where then would the 'intensity' be? But *changes*—ever so many and so amusing and so agreeable. The intensity is compatible with *them*—nothing, clearly, is going to be so interesting as to make out, with plenty of good-will, how compatible!" There was unmistakably everywhere a more embroidered surface—the new free figures played over the canvas; so that at this rate, in the time to come, how far might the embroidery not go, what silk and gold mightn't it weave into the pattern? It wasn't of course a question of rhapsodizing—Cambridge was Cambridge still, and all faithful to its type; but the rustle of the trees in the summer night had a larger tone, the more frequent lamplight slept upon ampler walls, the body of impression was greater and the University, above all, seemed in more confident possession. It massed there in multiplied forms, with new and strange architectures looming through the dark; it appeared to have wandered wide and to be stretching forth, in many directions, long, acquisitive arms.

This vision, for the moment, of a great dim, clustered but restlessly expansive Harvard, hushed to vacation stillness as to a deep ambitious dream, was, for the impressible story-seeker, practically the germ of the most engaging of the generalized images of reassurance, the furniture, so to speak, of the *other* scale, that the extension of his view was to cause him to cultivate. Reassurance is required, before the spectacle of American manners at large, whenever one most acutely perceives how little honor they tend to heap on the art of discrimination, and it is at such hours that, turning in his frequent stupefaction, the restless analyst reaches out for support to the nearest faint ghost of a constituted Faculty. It takes no exceptional exposure to the promiscuous life to show almost any institution pretending to university form as stamped here with the character and function of the life-saving monasteries of the dark ages. They glow, the humblest of them, to the imagination—the imagination that fixes the surrounding scene as a huge Rappacini garden rank with each variety of the poison-plant of the money-passion—they glow with all the vividness of the defined alternative, the possible antidote, and seem to call upon us to blow upon the flame till it is made inextinguishable. So little time had it taken, at any rate, to suggest to us that a new and higher price, in American conditions, is

attaching to the cloister, literally—the place inaccessible (to put it most pertinently) to the shout of the newspaper, the place to perambulate, the place to think, apart from the crowd. Doubtless indeed I was not all aware of it at the time, but the image I touch upon in connection with those first moments was to remain with me, the figure of the rich old Harvard organism brooding, exactly, through the long vacation, brooding through the summer night, on discriminations, on insidencies, on sublime and exquisite heresies to come.

After that arrived daylight recognitions, but they were really for the most part offered me, as in a full cup, by the accident of a couple of hours that were to leave me the pure essence, the finer sense of them. These were a matter of a fortnight later, as I had had immediately to make an absence, and the waning September afternoon of the second occasion took on a particular quality for this deferred surrender of a dozen stored secrets. “Secrets” I call them because the total impression was of the production of some handful of odds and ends that had lurked, for long, in a locked drawer, and which, being brought out, might promote, by their blinking consciousness, either derision or respect. They excited, as befell, an extraordinary tenderness—on which conclusion it was fortunate to be able afterwards to rest. I wandered, for the day’s end, with a young modern for whom the past had not been and who was admirably unconscious of the haunting moral of the whole mutation—the tune to which the pampered present made the other time look comparatively grim. Each item of the pampered state contributed to this effect—the finer *mise-en-scène*, the multiplied resources, halls, faculties, museums, undergraduate and postgraduate habitations (these last of so large a luxury); the pompous little club-houses, visited, all vacant, in the serious telltale twilight that seemed to give them, intellectually, “away”; the beautiful new Union, with its great grave noble hall, of which there would be so much more to be said; and above all, doubtless, the later majesties of the Law School, in the near presence of which the tiny old disinherited seat of that subject, outfaced and bedimmed, seemed unable to make even a futile plea for quaintness. I went into the new Law Library, immense and supreme—in the shadow of which I caught myself sniffing the very dust, prehistoric but still pungent, of the old. I saw in the distance a distinguished friend, all alone, be-

latedly working there, but to go to him I should have had to cross the bridge that spans the gulf of time, and, with a suspicion of weak places, I was nervous about its bearing me.

What such delicacies came to, then and afterwards, for the whole impression, was the instinct not to press, not to push on, till forced, through any half-open door of the real. The real was there, certainly enough, outside and all round, but there was standing-ground, more immediately, for a brief idyl, and one would walk in the idyl, if only from hour to hour, while one could. This could but mean that one would cultivate the idyllic, for the social, for the pictorial illusion, by every invoking and caressing art; and in fact, as a consequence, the reflection of our observer's experience for the next few weeks—that is so long as the spell of the autumn lasted—would be but the history of his more or less ingenious arts. With the breaking of the autumn, later on, everything broke, everything went—everything was transposed at least into another key. But for the time so much had been gained—the happy trick had been played.

VIII.

It was after all in the great hall of the Union perhaps (to come back to that delicate day's end) that the actual vibration of response seemed most to turn to audible music—repeated, with all its suggestiveness, on another occasion or two. For the case was unmistakably that just there, more than anywhere, by a magnificent stroke, an inspiration working perhaps even beyond its consciousness, the right provision had been made for the remembering mind. The place was addressed in truth so largely to an enjoying and producing future that it might seem to frown on mere commemoration, on the backward vision; and yet, at the moment I speak of, its very finest meaning might have been that of a liberal monument to those who had come and gone, to the company of the lurking ghosts. The air was full of them, and this was its service, that it cared for them *all*, and thus eased off the intensity of their appeal. And yet it appeared to play that part for a reason more interesting than reducible to words—a reason that mainly came out for me while, in the admirable hall aforesaid, I stood before Sargent's high portrait of Major Henry Lee Higginson, *donatorio* of the house (as well as author, all roundabout, of innumerable other civil gifts); a representative

of life and character, a projection of genius, which even that great painter has never outdone. Innumerable, ever, are the functions performed and the blessings wrought by the supreme work of art, but I know of no case in which it has been so given to such a work to make the human statement with a great effect, to interfuse a group of public acts with the personality, with the characteristics, of the actor. The acts would still have had all their value if the portrait had had less, but they would not assuredly have been able to become so interesting, would not have grown to affect each beneficiary, however obscure, as proceeding, for him, from a possible relation, a possible intimacy. It is to the question of intimacy with somebody or other that all great practical public recognition is finally carried back—but carried only by the magic carpet, when the magic carpet happens to be there. Mr. Sargent's portrait of Henry Higginson is exactly the magic carpet.

That was the "pull" (one kept on feeling) that this happy commemorative creation of the Union had over the great official, the great bristling brick, Valhalla of the early "seventies," that house of honor and of hospitality which, under the name of the Alumni Hall, dispenses (apart from its containing a noble auditorium) laurels to the dead and dinners to the living. The recording tablets of the members of the University sacrificed, on the Northern side, in the Civil War, are too impressive not to retain here, always, their collective beauty; but the monumental office and character suffer throughout from the too scant presence of the massive and the mature. The great structure spreads and soars with the best will in the world, but succeeds in resembling rather some high-masted ship at sea, in slightly prosaic equilibrium, than a thing of builded foundations and embrasured walls. To which it is impossible not immediately to add that these distinctions are relative and these comparisons almost odious, in face of the recent generations, gathered in from beneath emptier skies, who must have found in the big building as it stands an admonition and an ideal. So much the better for the big building, assuredly, and none so calculably the worse for the generations themselves. The reflection follows close moreover that, tactfully speaking, criticism has no close concern with Alumni Hall; it is as if that grim visitor found the approaches closed to him—had to enter, to the loss of all his identity, some relaxing air of

mere sentimental, mere shameless association. He turns his back, a trifle ruefully whistling, and wanders wide; so at least I seemed to see him do, all September, all October, and hereabouts in particular: I felt him resignedly reduced, for the time, to looking over, to looking through, the fence—all the more that, at Cambridge, there was at last something in the nature of a fence so to be dealt with.

The smaller aspects, the sight of mere material arrears made up, may seem unduly to have held me when I say that few fresh circumstances struck me as falling more happily into the picture than this especial decency of the definite, the palpable affirmation and belated delimitation of College Yard. The high, decorated, recurrent gates and the still insufficiently high iron palings—representing a vast ring and even now incomplete—may appear, in spots, extemporized and thin; but that signifies little in presence of the precious idea on the side of which, in the land of the “open door,” the all abstract outline, the timid term and the general concession, they bravely range themselves. The open door—as it figures here in respect to everything but trade—may make a magnificent place, but it makes poor places; and in places, despite our large mistrust of privacy, and until the national ingenuity shall have invented a substitute for them, we must content ourselves with living. This especial drawing of the belt at Harvard is an admirably interesting example of the way in which the formal enclosure of objects at all interesting immediately refines upon their interest, immediately establishes values. The enclosure may be impressive from without, but from within it is delicious; nothing is more curious than to trace in the aspects so controlled the effect of their established relation to it. This resembles, in the human or social order, the improved situation of the founding who has discovered his family or of the actor who has mastered his part.

The older buildings, in the Yard, profit indeed, on the spot, to the story-seeking mind, by the fact of their comparative exhibition of the tone of time—so prompt an ecstasy and so deep a relief reward, in America, everywhere, any suggested source of interest that is not the interest of importunate newness. That source overflows, all others run thin; but the wonder and the satisfaction are that in College Yard more than one of these should have finally been set to running thick. The best pieces

of the earlier cluster, from Massachusetts to Stoughton, emerge from their elongation of history with a paler archaic pink in their brickwork; their scant primitive details, small "quaintnesses" of form, have turned, each, to the expressive accent that no short-cut of "style" can ever successfully imitate, and from their many-paned windows, where, on the ensconced benches, so many generations have looked out, they fall, in their minor key, into the great main current of ghostly gossip. "See, see, we are getting on, we are getting almost ripe, ripe enough to justify the question of taste about us. We are growing a complexion—which takes almost as long, and is in fact pretty well the same thing, as growing a philosophy; but we are putting it on and entering into the dignity of time, the beauty of life. We are in a word beginning to begin, and we have that best sign of it, haven't we? that we make the vulgar, the very vulgar, think we are beginning to end."

That moreover was not the only relation thus richly promoted; there could be no unrest of analysis worthy of the name that failed to perceive how, after term had opened, the type of the young men coming and going in the Yard gained, for vivacity of appeal, through this more marked constitution of a *milieu* for it. Here, verily, questions could swarm; for there was scarce an impression of the local life at large that didn't play into them. One thing I had not yet done—I had not been, under the best guidance, out to Ellis Island, the seat of the Commissioner of Immigration, in the bay of New York, to catch in the fact, as I was to catch later on, a couple of hours of the ceaseless process of the recruiting of our race, of the plenishing of our huge national *pot-au-feu*, of the introduction of fresh—of perpetually fresh so far it isn't perpetually stale—foreign matter into our heterogeneous system. But even without that a haunting wonder as to what might be becoming of us all, "typically," ethnically, and thereby physiognomically, linguistically, *personally*, was always in order. The young men in their degree, as they flocked candidly up to college, struck me as having much to say about it, and there was always the sense of light on the subject, for comparison and reference, that a long experience of other types and other manners could supply. Swarming ingenuous youths, *whom did they look like the sons of?*—that inquiry, as to any group, any couple, any case, represented a game that it was posi-

tively thrilling to play out. There was plenty to make it so, for there was, to begin with, both the forecast of the thing that might easily settle the issue and the forecast of the thing that might easily complicate it.

No impression so promptly assaults the arriving visitor of the United States as that of the overwhelming preponderance, wherever he turns and twists, of the unmitigated "business man" face, ranging through its various possibilities, its extraordinary actualities, of intensity. And I speak here of facial cast and expression alone, leaving out of account the questions of voice, tone, utterance and attitude, the chorus of which would vastly swell the testimony and in which I seem to discern, for these remarks at large, a treasure of illustration to come. Nothing, meanwhile, is more concomitantly striking than the fact that the women, over the land—allowing for every element of exception—appear to be of a markedly finer texture than the men, and that one of the liveliest signs of this difference is precisely in their less narrowly specialized, their less commercialized, distinctly more generalized, physiognomic character. The superiority thus noted, and which is quite another matter from the universal fact of the mere usual female femininity, is far from constituting absolute distinction, but it constitutes relative, and it is a circumstance at which interested observation snatches, from the first, with an immense sense of its *portée*. There are, with all the qualifications it is yet open to, fifty reflections to be made upon the truth it seems to represent, the appearance of a queer deep split or chasm between the two stages of personal polish, the two levels of the conversible state, at which the sexes have arrived. It is at all events no exaggeration to say that the imagination at once embraces it as *the* feature of the social scene, recognizing it as a subject fruitful beyond the common, and wondering even if for pure drama, the drama of manners, anything anywhere else touches it. If it be a "subject," verily—with the big vision of the intersexual relation as, at such an increasing rate, a prey to it—the right measure for it would seem to be offered in the art of the painter of life by the concrete example, the art of the dramatist or the novelist, rather than in that of the talker, the reporter at large. The only thing is that, from the moment the painter begins to look at American life brush in hand, he is in danger of seeing, in comparison, almost nothing else in it—

nothing, that is, so characteristic as this apparent privation, for the man, of his right kind of woman, and this apparent privation, for the woman, of her right kind of man.

The right kind of woman for the American man may really be, of course, as things are turning out with him, the woman as to whom his most workable relation is to support her and bear with her—just as the right kind of man for the American woman may really be the man who intervenes in her life only by occult, by barely divivable, by practically disavowed courses. But the ascertainment and illustration of these truths would be, exactly, very conceivably high sport for the ironic poet—who has surely hitherto neglected one of his greatest current opportunities. It in any case remains vivid that American life may, as regards much of its manifestation, fall upon the earnest view as a society of women “located” in a world of men, which is so different a matter from a collection of men of the world; the men supplying, as it were, all the canvas, and the women all the embroidery. Just this vividness it was that held up the torch, through the Cambridge autumn, to that question of the affiliation of the encountered Harvard undergraduate which I may not abandon. In what proportion of instances would it stick out that the canvas, rather than the embroidery, was what he had to show? In what proportion would he wear the stamp of the unredeemed commercialism that should betray its paternity? In what proportion, in his appearance, would the different social “value” imputable to his mother have succeeded in interposing? The discerned answer to these inquiries is really, after all, too precious (in its character of contribution to one’s total gathered wisdom), to be given away prematurely; but there was at least always the sense, to which the imagination reverted, that in the collegiate cloisters and academic shades of other countries this absence of a possible range of origin and breeding in a young type had not been so felt. The question of origin, the question of breeding, had been large—never settled in advance; there had been fifty *sorts* of persons, fifty representatives of careers, to whom the English, the French, the German universitarian of tender years might refer you for a preliminary account of him.

I speak of my keeping back, for the present, many of my ultimate perceptions, but I may none the less recall my having had, all the season, from early, the ring in my ears of a reply I had

heard made, on the spot, to a generous lady offering entertainment to a guest, a stranger to the scene, whose good impression she had had at heart. "What kind of people should I like to meet? Why, my dear madam, have you more than *one* kind?" At the same time that I could remember that, however, I could also remember that the consistently *bourgeois* fathers must themselves in many cases have had mothers whose invitation to their male offspring to clutch at their relatively finer type had not succeeded in getting itself accepted. That constituted a fatal precedent, and it would have to be in the female offspring, probably, that one should look for evidences of the clutching—an extension of the inquiry for which there was plenty of time. What did escape from submersion, meanwhile, as is worth mentioning, was the golden state of being reminded, at moments that there are no such pleasure-giving accidents, for the mind, as violations of the usual in conditions that make them really precarious and rare. As the usual, in our vast crude democracy of trade, is the new, the simple, the cheap, the common, the commercial, the immediate, and, all too often, the ugly, any human product that those elements fail conspicuously to involve or to explain, any creature, or even any feature, not turned out to pattern, any form of suggested rarity, subtlety, ancience, or other pleasant perversity, prepares for us a recognition akin to rapture. These lonely ecstasies of the truly open sense make up often, in the hustling, bustling desert, for such "sinkings" of the starved stomach as have led one too often to have to tighten one's æsthetic waistband.

IX.

All of which is sufficiently to imply, again, that for adventurous contemplation, at any of the beguiled hours of which I pretend here but to give the general happier drift, there was scarce such a thing as a variation of insistence. As every fact was convertible into a fancy, there was only an encouraged fusion of possible felicities and possible mistakes, stop-gaps before the awful advent of a "serious sense of critical responsibility." Or say perhaps rather, to alter the image, that there was only a builded breakwater against the assault of matters demanding a *literal* notation. I walked, at the best, but on the breakwater—looking down, if one would, over the flood of the real, but much more occupied with the sight of the old Cambridge ghosts, who

seemed to advance one by one, even at that precarious eminence, to meet me. My small story would gain infinitely in richness if I were able to name them, but they swarmed all the while too thick, and of but two or three of them alone is it true that they push their way, of themselves, through any silence. It was thus at any rate a question—as I have indeed already sufficiently shown—of what one read *into* anything, not of what one read out of it; and the occasions that operated for that mild magic resolve themselves now into three or four of an intrinsic color so dim as to be otherwise well-nigh indistinguishable. Why, if one could tell it, would it be so wonderful, for instance, to have stood on the low cliff that hangs over the Charles, by the nearer side of Mount Auburn, and felt the whole place bristle with merciless memories? It was late in the autumn and in the day—almost evening; with a wintry pink light in the west, the special shade, fading into a heartless prettiness of gray, that shows with a polar chill through the grim tracery of November. Just opposite, at a distance, beyond the river and its meadows, the white face of the great empty Stadium stared at me, as blank as a rising moon—with Soldiers' Field squaring itself like some flat memorial slab that waits to be inscribed. I had seen it inscribed a week or two before in the fantastic lettering of a great intercollegiate game of football, and that impression had been so documentary, as to the capacity of the American public for momentary gregarious emphasis, that I regret having to omit here all the reflections it prompted.

They were not, however, what was now relevant, save in so far as the many-mouthed uproar they recalled was a voice in the more multitudinous modern hum, amid which one listened almost in vain for the sound of the old names. One of these in particular, rose to my lips—it was impossible to stand there and not reach out a hand to J. R. L. as to a responsive personal presence, the very genius of the spot and who, from early, had given it the direct literary consecration without which even the most charming seats of civilization go through life awkwardly and ruefully, after the manner of unchristened children. They lack thus, for the great occasions, the great formal necessities, their "papers." It was thanks to Lowell, even more immediately than to Longfellow, that Cambridge *had* its papers—though if I find myself putting that word into the past tense it is perhaps be-

cause of the irresistible admonition, too (proceeding so from a thousand local symptoms), that titles embodied in literary form are less and less likely, in the Harvard air, to be asked for. That is clearly not the way the wind sets: we see the great university sit and look very hard, at blue horizons of possibility, across the high table-land of her future; but the light of literary desire is not perceptibly in her eye (nothing is more striking than the recent drop in her of any outward sign of literary curiosity); precisely for which reason it was, doubtless, in part, that the changed world seemed reflected with a certain tragic intensity even in faces ever so turned to cheerful lights as those of my two constructive companions.

I had passed high, square, sad old Elmwood on the way to my cliff over the Charles, and had wonderingly lingered a little about it. I had passed Mr. Longfellow's immemorial, historical, admired residence, still ample and symmetrical and visibly tourist-haunted (the only detected ruffle of its noble calm); elements of the picture that had rekindled for an hour the finer sensibility, the finer continuity and piety. It was because of these things, again, that I felt the invoked pair beside me presently turn away, as under a chill, from that too spectral (in its own turn) stare of the Stadium—perceived as a portent of the more *roaring*, more reported and excursionized scene; and in particular seemed to see J. R. L.'s robust humor yield to the recognition of the irony of fate, dear to every poet, in one of its most pointed forms. That humor had played of old, charmingly, over the thesis that Cambridge, Mass., was, taken altogether, the most inwardly civilized, most intimately humane, among the haunts of men; whereby it had committed itself, this honest adventurer, to a patient joy in the development of the *genius loci*, and was therefore without provision, either of poetry or of prose, against the picture of proportions and relations overwhelmingly readjusted. If the little old place, with its accessible ear, had been so brave, what was the matter with the big new one, going in, as it would itself say, for greater braveries still? Nothing, no doubt, but that the possession of an ear would be ceasing to count as an advantage. In what produced form, for instance, if he had been right, was now represented the love of letters of which he had been so distinguished an example? If he had on the other hand *not* been right—well, it would all be rather

dreadful. Such, at all events, may be the adventures of a revisiting spirit—when he has happened to revisit too ingenious an old friend.

The old friend, moreover, had meanwhile had, and in relation to this large loose fringe of the town, there so freely disposed, one of his personal disconcertments; he had turned his steps, for the pleasure of memory, to Fresh Pond, dear to the muses of youth, the Sunday afternoons of spring, and had to accept there his clearest vision perhaps of the new differences and indifferences. The little nestling lake of other days had ceased to nestle; there was practically no Fresh Pond any more, and I seemed somehow to see why the muses had fled even as from the place at large. The light flutter of their robes had surrounded far-away walks and talks: one could at this day, on printed, on almost faded pages, give chapter and verse, for the effect, audible on the Sunday afternoons, of their habit of murmurous hinted approval. Other things had come, by makeweight: the charming Country Club on toward Watertown, all verandahs and golf-links and tennis lawns, all tea and ices and self-consciousness; and there had come, thereabouts, too, the large extension of the "Park System," the admirable commissioners' roads that reach across the ruder countryside like the arms of carnivorous giants stretching over a tea-table of blackberries and buns. But these things were in the eternal American note, the note of the gregarious, the concentric, and pervaded moreover by the rustle of petticoats too distinguishable from any garment-hem of the sacred nine. The desecrated, the destroyed resort had favored, save on rare feast days, the single stroll, or at the worst the double, dedicated to shared literary secrets; which was why I almost angrily missed, among the ruins, what I had mainly gone back to recover—some echo of the dreams of youth, the titles of tales, the communities of friendship, the sympathies and patience, in fine, of dear W. D. H.

HENRY JAMES.